

TRINITY CHARGE--THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
 Ralph C. Link, Pastor
 Christ Church, Duncannon 9:00 A.M.
 Trinity Church, New Bloomfield 10:30 A.M.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP August 20, 1972

The Organ Prelude
 *The Hymn of Praise 65
 *The Call to Worship
 *The Prayer of Confession (Unison)
 Almighty God forgive us for our faulty following of the Master, our slow faith in his power to save, our timid, hesitant answers to his call for service, our insensibility to the meaning of his cross; for all that mars our discipleship and makes it difficult for others to believe in him; forgive us, O Lord, and give us grace to follow the Master more steadfastly. Help your people, our Father, to be truly penitent, empower us to overcome all our temptations, enable us faithfully to live according to your will, and create within us a growing likeness to Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
 *The Kyrie
 *The Assurance of Pardon
 The Scripture----Matthew 7:13-14
 Luke 13:23-24
 John 14:6-14
 *The Gloria Patri
 The Pastoral Prayer
 The Announcements
 The Receiving of Tithes and Offerings
 *The Doxology
 *The Offering Prayer and Lord's Prayer
 The Hymn of Meditation
 The Sermon----"One Way. But Is It The Only Way?"
 The Sermon Prayer
 *The Hymn of Response 474 393

*The Benediction
 *The Threefold Amen
 *The Postlude

*Congregation Stands

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our training session and bible study will be held in the church in Duncannon on Wednesday evening at 7:30 PM. We will be studying & discussing "Sin."

The Duncannon Churchmen's Breakfast will be held Sunday Aug. 27th at 7:00 AM. at Paul Hepfer's lot. All men invited. ON 849 TURN

AT PERKINS' CHURCH. 6. THURSDAY EVENING, THEN LEFT 8
 CHRIST CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS COME TO PINE
 UPPER ROOMS AVAILABLE LINE

Richard Fox is in Room 1005--Harrisburg H.

Anyone wishing to donate blood for Mrs. Linda Achenbach contact Polyclinic Hospital. THIS IS TO RELIEVE BLOOD GIVEN.

TRINITY CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Bloomfield Adult Fellowship will have a covered dish picnic at our next meeting Aug. 24th. We will meet at the United Church of Christ at 4:00 PM and go to Little Buffalo State Park. Transportation will be furnished from the church. All adults welcome. Bring a covered dish and join our fellowship.

We thank Mrs. Bell for teaching the Sunday School lesson this morning.

CHANGE HY MMS

WELCOMES VISITORS
 MRS. D. 9. THIS WEEK

John

"One Way. But Is It The Only Way?"

Text: John 14:6 "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."

Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many."

Luke 13+24 24, "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."

"I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I --
I took the one less traveled by,
And that made all the difference."

This bit of verse is from the poem, "The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost." I believe it speaks of Christianity and what is required by this religion. But I think it also is telling us that we must make a decision in life somewhere along the way, and that decision makes all the difference.

I have been taught that a sermon is not just ~~for~~ an amount of time set aside for a man to speak to a group of people, but it is to be a message from the word of God, and at the very end it gives all those who hear it a chance to make a decision. It is to leave them with a choice. So each and every week then, we are to be given a choice of something. The only real choice in the life of anyone as far as I am concerned, is the choice of whether they accept or reject Jesus Christ. Now what prompted my thoughts for this sermon, was a question put to me by one of our members. He asked me, if it was fair to feel that the Christian was the only one to be saved. Was it fair to believe that all of the other people such as the Jews, many of ~~which~~ ^{whom} lead much more

religious and devout lives, than many Christians, will be doomed to Hell and not have salvation? Is it fair to believe that only Christians have this salvation?

Now if you think about this, it becomes quite a question. I believe it to be a question that cannot be answered in one sermon. So I shall endeavor to lay the groundwork this Sunday, and to reach some conclusions next Sunday.

The answer I gave was that I believe God will save many others, other than Christians. But this needs to be expanded and qualified, because to ~~xx~~ merely say that others will be saved, leaves it hanging in mid-air. We must in this instance as in all others, search out the scriptures and seek the answer of God. We must see what the Bible tells us about this. The answer that seems to come to the forefront with this question is one of, "I don't know." But to merely say this is a cop-out, and in all fairness to the question as well as the questioner, an answer must be sought. So with this in mind let us look at the background.

The passage of scripture that is the basis for the belief of only Christians being saved, is found in John 14:6. Jesus states, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." This implies and means that only through Christ can anyone be saved. Speaking strictly along these lines then, this becomes a very selfish ideal. It excludes anyone who has not accepted Jesus Christ. To a person who accepts the unselfishness of Christianity and the unselfishness it teaches, this is intolerable. People feel, and rightly so, that it is too unrealistic for the same Jesus who preached giving and sharing, to become so dogmatic about this. So to try to resolve the conflict and to cast light upon it we must search out the scriptures for the answer.

To look at other words spoken by Jesus in Matthew 7:13 and 14 we find that he said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide ~~that~~

and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many." Luke records this ~~xx~~ in the 13th chapter, verse 24, "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."

These are two quotations that add to the question at hand, that it is not a completely easy task to enter into the kingdom of God. We could add to it the quotation of a camel going through the needles eye more easily than a wealthy man into the kingdom and so on. But let us look instead to the basis of Christianity, and that is the roots that have come from Judaism. In Deuteronomy 11:26 we read of Moses telling the Israelites, "Behold I set before you a blessing and a curse: The blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, and the curse if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God."

In Deuteronomy ^{30:19} we read of Moses again telling the people as they are about ready to cross over the Jordan, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendents may live." In Proverbs 14:12 we read, "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." In Jeremiah 21:8 we read, "And to this people you shall say: Thus says the Lord: Behold I set before you the way of life and the way of death."

These are just a few of the many verses to be found ~~both~~ in the Old Testament and there are also many in the New Testament dealing with the path to be walked.

In all of this can be found one thing and that is, ~~there is~~ ~~not~~ it is a choice that must be made by all. We are all given the opportunity to accept God or reject Him. Jesus ~~tells~~ told those who asked in the scripture taken from Luke that, we can not just take it for granted that we are among the elect. We must seek the narrow way, and we must live accordingly. But he also lets it be known that the gate is open.

No man is pre-condemned by God, there is always the chance to enter the kingdom. A ~~man~~ ^{GREAT MISSIONARY} named John Paton wrote in a book entitled, "Missionary To The New Hebrides," of an uncle Walter ~~of his~~ who left home and after several ~~years~~ ^{letters} disappeared and was never heard from again. The mother of this man never gave up hoping and each night she would open the door wide and leave it that way until morning. Her one cry was, "Come home my boy." ^{ILLUSTRATION OF SCOTCH GIRL.} This is how God is, He is calling each of us, and we must each make our choice.

But in all of this a certain amount of training and preparation are necessary. A surgeon takes years of practice to become proficient. Football and other sports require a lot of practice and demands on time and energy. So if we are to walk the narrow road and seek Christlikeness, we must forgo the wide way and give up unChristlikeness. Renunciation is the price one pays for a worthy life such as in the sciences, the arts, in industry and in sports. Should not renunciation be the price one pays for a worthy life in Christ?

To surrender worthiness is easy for the pathway is wide, and it is so well filled, we will never lack for companions. But the true way is straight and this applies to the Jew as well as the Christian and we may even state that it applies to all other religions if one is to be a true disciple.

~~THIS THEN GIVES US SOME OF THE BACKGROUND TO RESOLVE THE QUESTION AT HAND. HOWEVER, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THIS MUST BE LOOKED AT THROUGH THE EYE OF A CHRISTIAN AND NOT THROUGH THE EYE OF A JEW OR HINDU, OR ANY OTHER RELIGION.~~

However we must remember one thing, we have set before us the way as seen from a Christian viewpoint. We cannot look at it through the eye of a Jew, or a Hindu or ~~any~~ through the eye of a follower of any other religion. ~~TEXT SUM UP WHAT I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO SAY.~~
In summation we can say that Christ gave a new twist to all that had been

A writer for a great newspaper once visited India, (Illustration of Nurse)

Giles Fletcher an English poet who lived ~~around~~ in the 16th century once wrote,

Poem, "Christ"

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.